

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT ON DJJDP AND DOC JOINT EFFORT TO
MAKE IN-HOME MONITORING AVAILABLE AS ALTERNATIVE
TO DETENTION FOR JUVENILES**

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North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Linda W. Hayes, Secretary

LEGISLATIVE REPORT ON DJJDP AND DOC JOINT EFFORT TO MAKE IN-HOME MONITORING AVAILABLE AS ALTERNATIVE TO DETENTION FOR JUVENILES

SECTION 17.6. It is the intent of the General Assembly to reduce the State's reliance on detention facilities and youth development centers in the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP) as correctional options for juveniles by increasing the use of community-based alternatives whenever possible. Therefore, the DJJDP and the Department of Correction (DOC) shall work together to increase the use of in-home monitoring as an alternative to detention for juveniles. The DOC and the DJJDP shall assess the monitoring needs for both the adult and juvenile systems, identify the contracts that the DOC currently has for monitoring services, and determine which contracts, if any, may be negotiated or renegotiated to cover monitoring services for both the adult and juvenile systems. The DJJDP and the DOC may also identify other options to increase the use of in-home monitoring as an alternative to detention for juveniles that may work well and be cost-effective.

The DJJDP and the DOC shall report to the Chairs of the House of Representatives and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Justice and Public Safety, the JOIN Legislative Corrections, Crime Control, and Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee, and the Fiscal Research Division regarding their findings and recommendations by September 1, 2011.

Background: The Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP) and the Department of Correction (DOC) have been working cooperatively to provide electronic monitoring services for juveniles since the DJJDP was created. DJJDP utilizes the same vendor that DOC is under contract with (G4S) and currently leases 229 radio frequency electronic monitoring units at the cost of \$1.45 per day. DOC provides monitoring services for juveniles on electronic monitoring at a cost to DJJDP of \$2.05 per day.

DJJDP Equipment: The radio frequency equipment used by DJJDP is outdated and is frequently returned for repairs. This radio frequency electronic monitoring equipment requires a land phone line within the home. Many homes no longer have these. The equipment requires that a Court Counselor go to the home of the juvenile to install the equipment. These installations often encounter technical difficulties and frequent malfunctions result in false alerts. DOC discontinued using radio frequency equipment in previous years, and uses only GPS technology. DJJDP is currently under contract to continue using this equipment from this vendor until June 2012.

Monitoring Services: By legislative mandate, effective September 6, 2011, DOC will no longer provide monitoring services for NC adults or juveniles who are on electronic monitoring. Instead, monitoring will be provided by the equipment vendor, G4S. G4S will bill DOC for the monitoring services and DOC will bill DJJDP under the current contract, but at the revised cost of \$1.30 per day.

Electronic Monitoring as an Alternative to Detention and Youth Development Centers and Other Initiatives

Electronic monitoring can and is being used to create alternatives to detention. However by using electronic monitoring, both GPS and Radio Frequency (RF), as a part of a broader and comprehensive strategy and utilizing proper equipment it will be more effective and will result in decreased utilization of detention.

The Department Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has begun an initiative to reduce disproportionate minority contact (DMC) through a more structured process in making decisions to detain juveniles and through the development of a system of graduated sanctions and rewards to guide the planning of dispositional decisions. A detention screening tool has been developed and will be tested and piloted in four judicial districts in the coming months. A graduated sanctions and rewards grid will be designed and implemented in each juvenile judicial district over the next twelve months. The implementation of both of these tools will be carried out collaboratively with key stakeholders in each county. The availability of effective electronic monitoring (both GPS and RF) is an essential component of the comprehensive strategy to decrease DMC by creating effective alternatives to detention.

Experience has taught us that the Alternative to Detention program (ATD) is most successfully implemented when specialized caseloads are created for Court Counselors to focus intensely on this population and when the statewide effort is supported by a designated staff person within the central office to provide training, technical assistance, liaison with the vendor and monitoring of performance. Resources needed for additional Court Counselors, necessary community programming and a central program director

should be funded by part of cost savings for the state and counties due to decreased detention admissions. Since there are multiple variables that drive detention utilization and wide variation across the state in the rates of detention, it is not possible to project precisely expected savings. However, a comprehensive strategy utilizing the above elements and support for strong community collaborations properly funded will result in a reduction in detention and a net savings for the state and counties.

Renegotiating Contracts: The DOC contract with G4S (the existing vendor) expires April 1, 2012. It includes the equipment lease and, now, monitoring services. A Request for Proposals has been submitted which includes GPS and radio frequency technology, and the ability for DJJDP to lease the same equipment available to DOC, and obtain monitoring services from the same vendor selected by DOC at the same price. DJJDP management staff has been invited to review the submitted proposals and to test equipment along with DOC staff, in making a decision on the vendor. This will allow both agencies to use GPS or radio frequency technology according to supervision requirements and whether cell phone or land line connectivity is available.